Modern Art

MUSEUM NEWS · THE TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART AUTUMN 1968

MODERN ART IN TOLEDO

The bold and innovative spirit of the twentieth century is clearly evident in the works created by its artists. Selections from the Museum's collection of modern painting and sculpture are presented here accompanied by the artists' own words. In these quotations the artists themselves elucidate some aspect of their artistic aims, their attitudes to their work, or their opinions as to what constitutes a work of art.

The Toledo Museum of Art has always collected contemporary art, as well as art of the past. It is part of its established policy of developing a comprehensive museum of art available to all in our community.

Most of the Museum's contemporary art has been acquired only a few years after creation and, therefore, is a testament to the Museum's continuing belief in the art of its own time. Supplementing the Museum's acquisitions have been a continuing series of temporary exhibitions of modern art. This tradition will be strengthened and emphasized in the Museum's new Gallery of Modern Art, where its own collection, as well as a new series of temporary exhibitions of contemporary art will be held.

This publication has been prepared by Katharine C. Lee, curatorial assistant of this Museum. It illustrates only a small selection of the Museum's acquisitions of modern art. All examples illustrated with the exception of one recent gift, have been acquired by the Museum with funds bequeathed to it by Edward Drummond Libbey or others. It is hoped that contributions from others in the community will enable the Museum to expand this vital area in the future growth of its collection.

The works of art illustrated in the following pages are expressions of a dynamic, revolutionary and creative period in which aesthetic endeavor constitutes a vital part of our civilization.

Otto Wittmann, Director

Museum News
THE TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART
TOLEDO, OHIO

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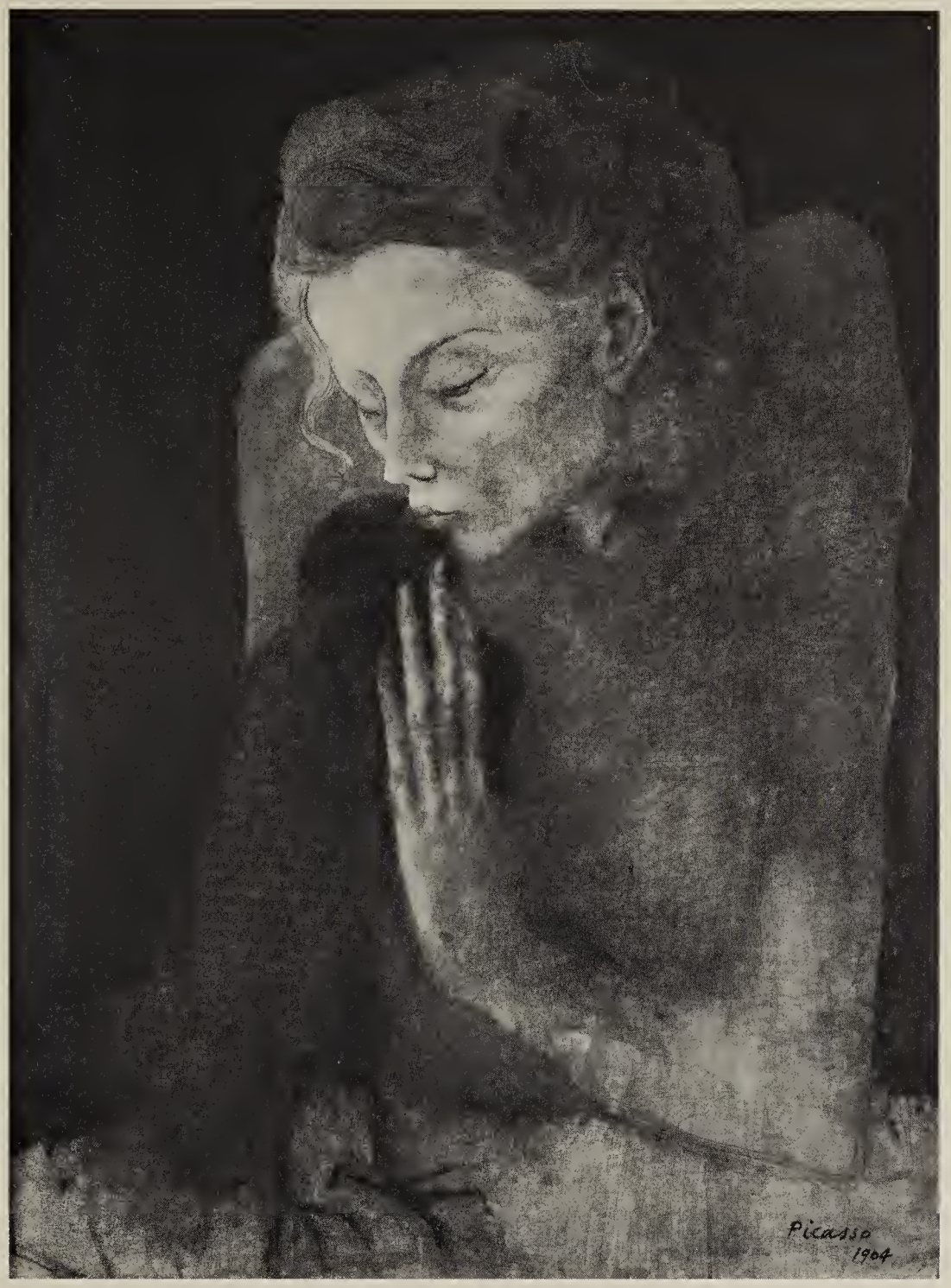


PABLO PICASSO, Spanish, working in France (1881-).
Woman with a Crow.
Gouache and pastel on paper. 1904.
25½ x 19½ inches.
Acquired, 1936.

Picasso here portrays Margot, daughter of the owner of the Parisian restaurant "Lapin Agile," and her pet crow. This work was executed during the artist's "Blue Period."

They speak of naturalism in opposition to modern painting. I would like to know if anyone has ever seen a natural work of art. Nature and art, being two different things, cannot be the same thing. Through art we express our conception of what nature is not.

Pablo Picasso, 1923

From *Picasso, Fifty Years of his Art* by Alfred H. Barr, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1946, p. 270.

ROBERT DELAUNAY, French (1885-1941).
The City of Paris.
Oil on canvas. ca. 1913.
$47^{1}/_{4}$ x $67^{5}/_{8}$ inches.
Acquired, 1955.

The source of inspiration for the Three Graces was a Pompeiian wall painting. Delaunay combines an ancient tradition of imagery with the most advanced pictorial concept of his time, Cubism. The curtain at the left creates the illusion that what we see is a theatrical presentation.

. . . movements of colored masses—color vibrating really as a function of itself, by contrasts . . . These images, although treated in an abstract way, are reminiscent of old habits (commonplaces) . . .

Robert Delaunay

From *Du cubisme a l'art abstrait* by Robert Delaunay, Paris, 1957, p. 81.
(Translation by Katharine Lee).

PIERRE BONNARD, French (1867-1947).
The Abduction of Europa.
Oil on canvas. 1919.
46¼ x 60¼ inches.
Acquired,1930.

A painter of intimate scenes from every day life, Bonnard's choice of a classical subject makes this painting unusual in his oeuvre. While Bonnard evokes the poetry of the ancient Mediterranean, his fresh paint handling and his vibrant color and light give the classical myth new life.

The presence of the object, the motif, is very disturbing to the painter at the time he is painting. Since the starting-point of a picture is an idea, if the object is there at the moment he is working, the artist is always in danger of allowing himself to be distracted by the effects of direct and immediate vision, and to lose the primary idea on the way. Thus, after a certain period of work, the painter can no longer recover his original idea and depends on accidental qualities, he reproduces the shadows he sees . . . and such details as did not strike him at the beginning.

Pierre Bonnard, 1943

From "Le bouquet de roses" by A. Lamotte with an introduction by Pierre Bonnard, *Verve;* vol. V, nos. 17-18, 1947.

YVES TANGUY, French, naturalized U. S. citizen in 1948 (1900-1955)
Passage of a Smile.
Oil on canvas. 1935.
25⅝ x 21¼ inches.
Acquired, 1938.

In an endless, surrealist panorama where forms are unrecognizable and yet evocative, Tanguy lyrically and somewhat hauntingly suggests emotions associated with the passage of a smile.

The painting develops before my eyes, unfolding its surprises as it progresses. It is this which gives me the sense of complete liberty, and for this reason I am incapable of forming a plan or making a sketch beforehand . . . .

I am, naturally, interested in the paintings of others. To cite a few of my favorites: Hieronymus Bosch, Cranach and Paolo Uccello among the old masters, and De Chirico (metaphysical period) of the contemporaries.

Yves Tanguy

From "Symposium: The Creative Process," *Art Digest,* January 15, 1954, p. 14.

LYONEL FEININGER, American, worked in Germany (1871-1956).
Baltic: A Recollection.
Oil on canvas. 1947.
20 x 35 inches.
Acquired, 1948.

Here Feininger suggests his memory of the Baltic Coast where he had spent the summers between 1924 and 1935. However, he created this painting in New York City.

. . . I don't paint a picture for the purpose of an esthetic achievement, and I never think of pictures in the traditional sense. From deep within arises an almost painful urge for the realization of inner experiences, an overwhelming longing, an unearthly nostalgia overcomes me at times, to bring them to light out of a long lost past . . . .

Lyonel Feininger, 1927

From *Lyonel Feininger, Marsden Hartley,* New York, Museum of Modern Art, 1944, p. 18.

GEORGIA O'KEEFFE, American (1887-).
Brown Sail, Wing and Wing.
Oil on canvas. 1940.
38 x 30 1/8 inches.
Acquired, 1949.

This picture was painted at Nassau in the Bahamas. The suggestion of a setting and such descriptive details as the lighthouses are evidence of the artist's moving towards a more representational approach than she had previously used.

Question: Do you always paint what you see? What about changing light?

O'Keeffe: You paint *from* your subject, not what you see, so you can't be bothered with changes in light. I rarely paint anything I don't know very well.

Georgia O'Keeffe

From *The Artist's Voice* by Katherine Kuh, New York, 1960.

CHARLES SHEELER, American (1883-).
Variations in Red.
Oil on canvas. 1949.
$15^{1}/_{8}$ x $23^{1}/_{4}$ inches.
Acquired, 1949.

The old barns in Bucks County, Pennsylvania (where Sheeler owned a week-end house) especially appealed as subject matter because of their clean, precise functional lines.

The source of my work in general is the visual world. I try to arrive at an organization of forms, which represents my equivalent of the organization I see around me in Nature. There I stop without trying to give expression to any hidden or underlying meaning. Having no theories I respond to those things which give me a pleasurable reaction, in themselves and in their relation to other things, and I attempt to set them down in a visual design. The result may range from an association of irrelevancies to a combination of forms closely interrelated in function or habit.

Charles Sheeler,1949

From *The Artist Speaks,* catalogue for an exhibition held at the Downtown Gallery, New York, 1949, Cat. no. 18.

GRAHAM SUTHERLAND, British (1903-).
Thorn Trees.
Oil on canvas. 1947.
36 x 35 inches.
Acquired, 1952.

The thorn trees are a religious image referring to the crown of thorns. The artist has barely suggested a "hollow headshaped space" (Sutherland's words) enclosed by the violently projecting thorns.

But broadly speaking, I should say that most of the objects which form my paintings I have actually seen in nature. I remove the traces of superficial reality or optical reality and try and retain the essence of the original object . . . .

The aim of a painter such as we have been discussing (a painter such as himself) seems to me to be bound up with his ability to be able to select certain aspects of what he has seen and felt and, as it were, to caricature the *essence* or the *gesture* of reality . . . .

Graham Sutherland

From *Contemporary Painters* by James Thrall Soby, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1948, p. 134.

BEN NICHOLSON, British (1894-).
Ides of March.
Oil on canvas. 1952.
36 x 30 inches.
Acquired, 1952.

The title refers to the date on which this work was painted: March 21, 1952.

A different painting, a different sculpture are different experiences just as walking in a field or over a mountain are different experiences and it is only at the point at which a painting becomes an actual experience in the artist's life, more or less profound and more or less capable of universal application according to the artist's capacity to live, that it is capable of becoming a part, also, of the lives of other people and that it can take its place in the structure of the world, in everyday life.

Ben Nicholson

From *Contemporary Painters* by James Thrall Soby, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1948, p. 133.

JACQUES VILLON, French (1875-1963).
Flowers.
Oil on canvas. 1946.
36¼ x 28¾ inches.
Acquired, 1949.

A participant in the innovating years of Cubism around 1910, Villon continued to work with this style into the 1960's. He developed a poetic approach to Cubism working with subtle structures devoid of rigid geometry and enlivened by lyrical color harmonies.

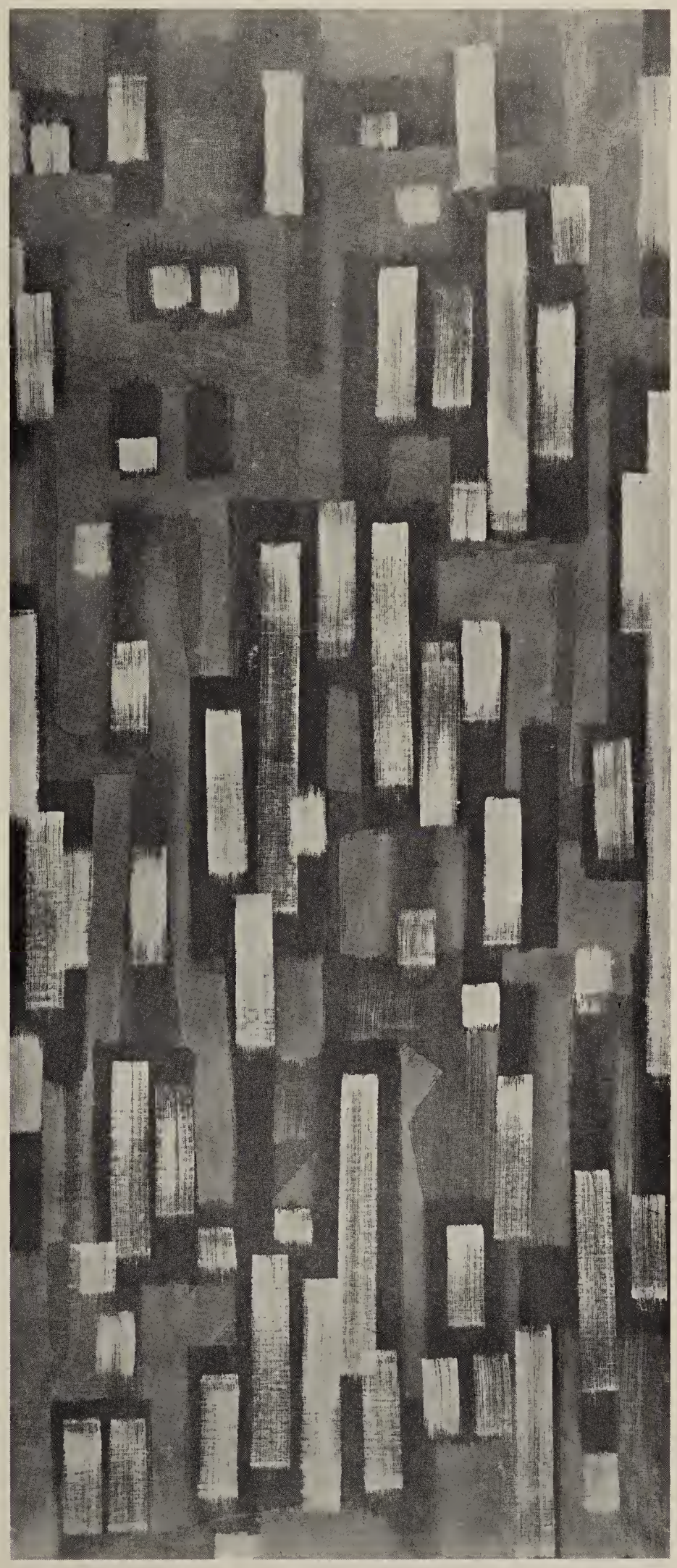
(Painting is) a way of searching and a mode of expression. With color as a lure and drawing as the line, painting casts in the inexhaustible gulf of the unknown, where possibilities are only suspected, and which it pulls out in successive plays onto the human plane and to the plane of consciousness; and there, with subtlety, it crystalizes subtleties. Painting represents perfumes, the spirit, the soul of things, where science only catalogues the outward appearance.

Jacques Villon

From *Jacques Villon* by Dora Vallier, Paris 1961, p. 80. (Translation by Katharine Lee).

AD REINHARDT, American (1920-1967).
No. 1, 1951
Oil on canvas. 1951.
79⅞ x 34 inches.
Acquired, 1953.

This structure of vibrantly colored rectangular strokes became simplified in Reinhardt's later works to monochromatic paintings in which rectangles or squares composed the space of the canvas.



Words in art are words.
Letters in art are letters.
Writing in art is writing.
Messages in art are not messages,
A work of art is not work.
Working in art is not working.
Work in art is work.
Not working in art is working.
Play in art is not play.

. . . . . .

Simplicity in art is not simplicity.
Less in art is not less.
More in art is not more.
Too little in art is not too little.
Too large in art is too large.
Too much in art is too much.
Chance in art is not chance.

. . . . . .

Art in art is art.
The end of art is art as art.
The end of art is not the end.

Ad Reinhardt

From *The New Art, A Critical Anthology*, edited by Gregory Battcock, "Writings by Ad Reinhardt," New York, 1966, pp. 206-209.

HEDDA STERNE (Mrs. Saul Steinberg), born in Rumania, American (1916-).
New York, No. 1.
Oil on canvas. 1954.
86 x 49 7/8 inches.
Acquired, 1957.

The mood of the New York City landscape is suggested by the dynamic curves and intersecting lines of highways and bridges and the flashes of light looming through the gloom of the black and grey city atmosphere.

The image is a transcription of a lyrical intuition, a discovery enlarging the realm of perception—that could not be (expressed) embodied in any other way —and is thus necessarily unfamiliar.

As to the future: When a creative experiment has matured, it has to be surpassed. There are no returns in real art. An interest in figures is possible but I should think that it could be a step ahead all the same.

Hedda Sterne

From *Contemporary American Painting and Sculpture,* Urbana, University of Illinois, 1961, p. 191.

WILLIAM BAZIOTES, American (1912-1963).
Scorpion.
Oil on canvas. 1952.
50 1/8 x 24 7/8 inches.
Acquired, 1952.

Although the artist often uses the name of something we know for the title of his paintings, the non-illustrative, biomorphic forms arise from the subconscious of the artist.

There is always a subject in my mind that is more important than anything else. Sometimes I am aware of it, sometimes not. I keep working on my canvas until I think it is finished. The subject matter may be revealed to me in the middle of the work, or I may not recognize it until a long time afterward.

William Baziotes, 1944

From *Abstract and Surrealist Art in America* by Sidney Janis, New York, 1944, p. 101.

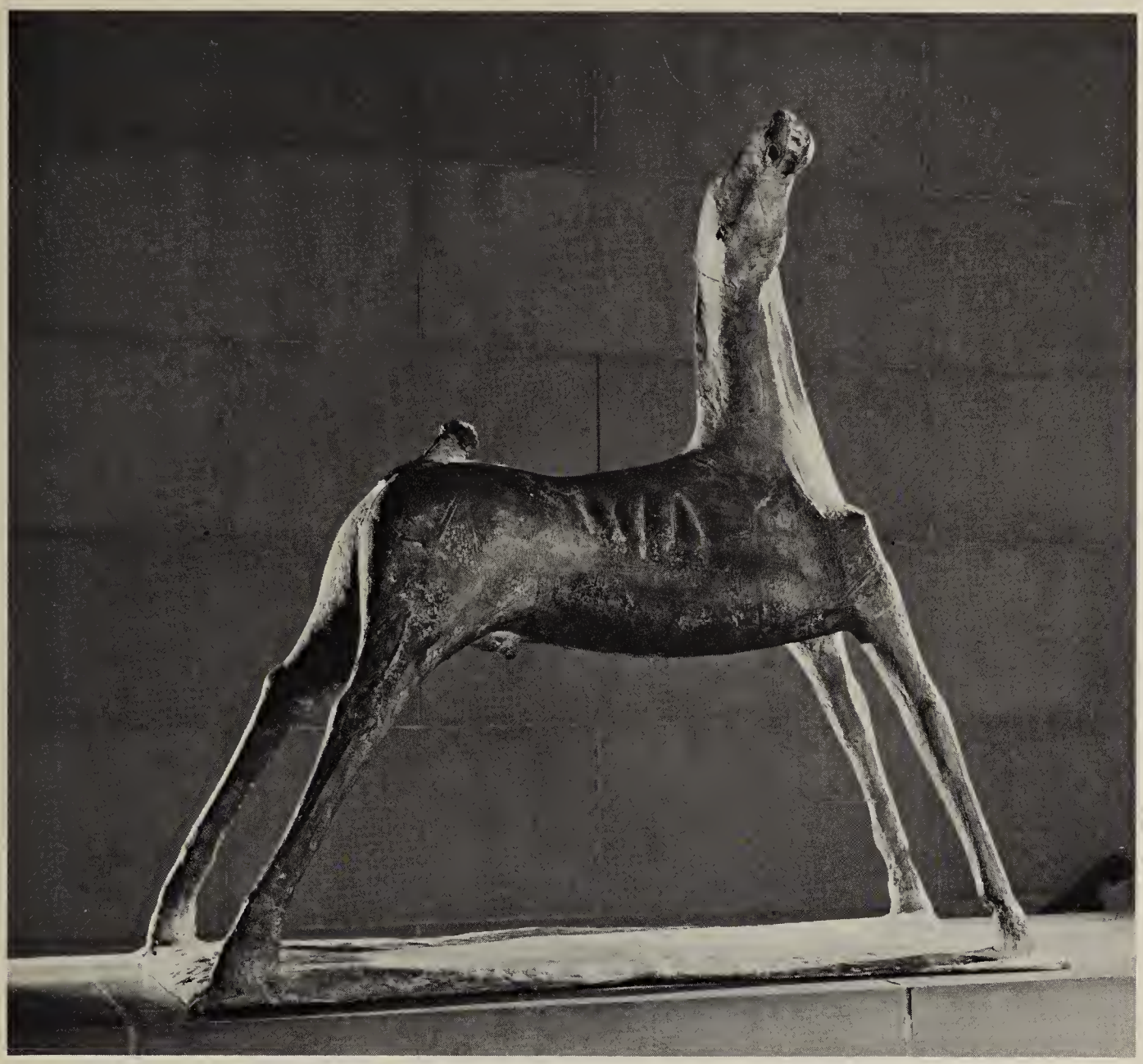
HENRY MOORE, British (1898-).
Reclining Figure (External Form).
Bronze. 1953/4.
Height 41, length 84 inches.
Acquired, 1958.

This is the first bronze that was cast of Reclining Figure. It was originally placed by Moore in the garden of his house and studio at Much Hadham, Hertfordshire. It was purchased directly from Henry Moore by the Museum.

When the sculptor understands his material, has a knowledge of its possibilities and its constructive build, it is possible to keep within its limitations and yet turn an inert block into a composition which has a full form existence, with masses of varied size and section conceived in their air-surrounded entirety, stressing and straining, thrusting and opposing each other in spatial relationship . . . .

Henry Moore

From "The Sculptors Aims" by Henry Moore first published in *Unit One* edited by Herbert Read, London, 1934.



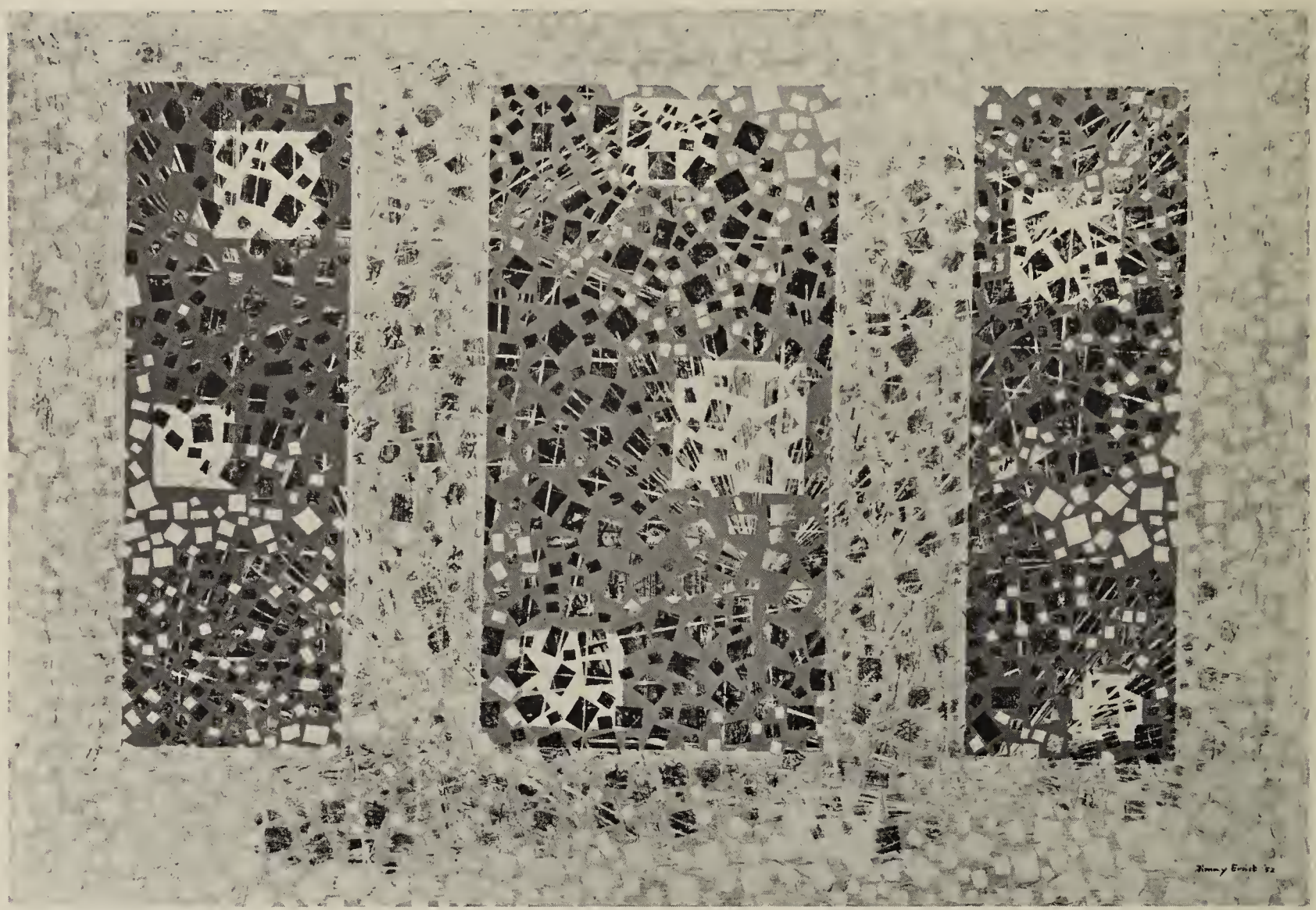
MARINO MARINI, Italian (1901-).
Horse. Bronze. 1950.
Height 45¾, length 47 inches.
Acquired, 1954.

The horse and the horse and rider are subjects that Marini worked with over and over again. The artist's memory from World War II of refugee peasants riding their farm horses and watching the sky for enemy airplanes is the source of inspiration for these sculptures which, in the hands of a great artist, become universal expressions of modern man's anxiety, loneliness, and courage.

I do not make any distinction between abstract and figurative sculpture, provided it is really sculpture in either case. What matters above all is the quality of a work of art. As for myself, since I am a Mediterranean, I can express myself freely only through what is human. But I accept and admire every other form of expression, provided the artist succeeds in transmitting his message through it.

Marino Marini

From *Marino Marini,* Curt Valentin Gallery, New York, 1953.



JIMMY ERNST, American (1920-).
Cirque d' Hiver.
Oil on canvas. 1952.
25 x 36 inches.
Acquired, 1953.

The subject is taken from a French circus held in tents during the winter. The play of the colorful action inside and the swirling snow outside inspired the impressions created in this painting.

There can be no question about the sincerity or validity of an artist's statement. The question is whether it can properly relate to his work. To relate, it would require considerable autobiographical effort in addition to a measure of detachment. It would demand a great deal of introspection with a sudden illogical reversal into exhibitionism. To be sure, the artist is aware of the pain and constant search involved in his work and that of others. He can decry mediocrity and pomposity with unequalled authority but finally he will find his one concrete statement to be: 'Here is a painting . . . I painted it'."

Jimmy Ernst

From *Contemporary American Painting and Sculpture,* Urbana, University of Illinois, 1953, p. 180.

NICOLAS DE STAEL, French born in Russia (1914-1955).
White Flowers in a Black Vase.
Oil on canvas. 1953.
$39^{1}/_{2} \times 28^{3}/_{4}$ inches.
Acquired, 1953.

De Staël was unusual among artists of his time in that he moved from a nonfigurative style in the forties to a figurative style in the fifties, the decade in which abstract painting, particularly abstract expressionism, emerged as the prevalent style.

I object to nothing that may fall beneath my glance. I do not paint before seeing. I am seeking only painting that is visible to the entire world . . .

Nicolas de Stael

From *Nicolas de Stael* by Denys Sutton, New York, 1960, p. 41.

VALERIOS CALOUTSIS, Greek, active in Paris (1927-).
Formation II.
Oil and plaster on canvas. 1960.
63¾ x 45 inches.
Acquired, 1961.

The rough-hewn textures of Caloutsis' abstractions reflect the patterns of the arid, sun-baked landscape of his native Crete. This picture also represents the trend in contemporary art to surpass the traditional limits of painting and sculpture.

I am interested first of all in texture. I want to create surfaces that the spectator feels compelled to touch. A painting should appeal to as many of the senses as possible. Not only to the eye, but to the sense of touch.

Valerios Caloutsis

From "Ego into Art," *The Studio*, by Mervyn Levy, vol. 164, no. 831, July 1962, p. 14.

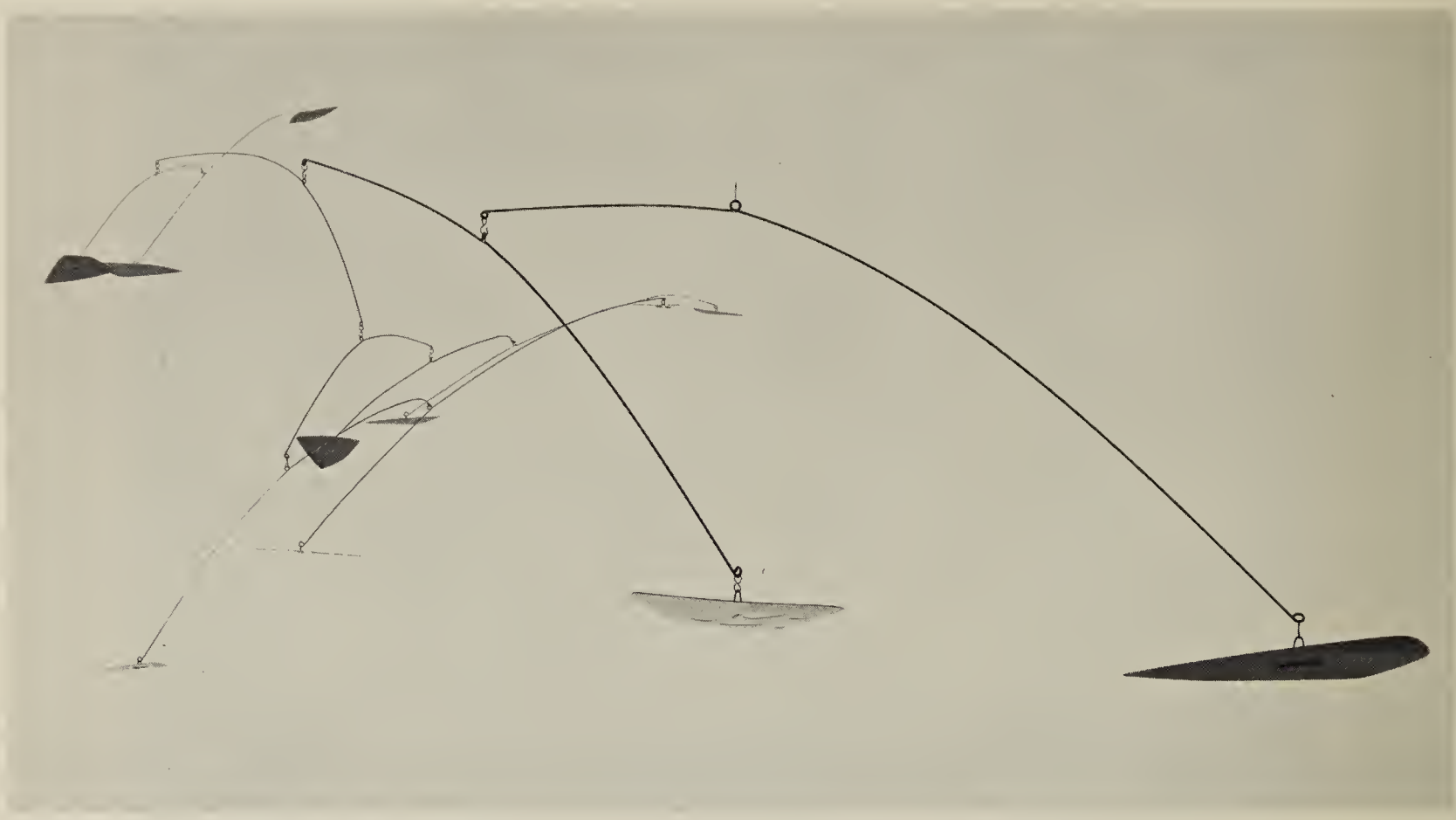
FRANCESCO SOMAINI, Italian (1926-).
Remembrance of the Apocalypse I.
Bronze. 1961.
Height 29⅞ inches.
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. W. W. Knight, Jr., Toledo, 1962.

Somaini lives in Milan, the city in Italy in which the contrast between the past and modern industrialism is most pronounced.

Somaini sets his highly organic pieces upon industrial steel beams and supports, a marriage that sums up one of the major problems the artist has set for himself in the past few years. He seeks to resolve the almost absolutely inharmonious worlds of creative, poetic imagery and industrial technology. In a very special sense this is a particularly Italian conflict . . .

James H. Beck on Francesco Somaini

From a review of an exhibition by James H. Beck in *Art News*, March, 1964, p. 9



ALEXANDER CALDER, American (1898-).
Mobile: Horizontal Black with Red Sieve. Sheet steel and wire, painted red and black. 1957.
Height approximately 5½ feet, length approx. 9 feet.
Acquired, 1960.

An engineer by training, Calder invented entirely new means of showing movement in sculpture; the sculptures, themselves, move. Delicately balanced on metal rods, the abstract biomorphic forms move naturally with every changing air current.

I think that . . . the underlying sense of form in my work has been the system of the Universe, or part thereof. For that is a rather large model to work from. What I mean is that the idea of detached bodies floating in space, of different sizes and densities, perhaps of different colors and temperatures, and surrounded and interlarded with wisps of gaseous condition, and some at rest, while others move in peculiar manners, seems to me the ideal source of form.

Alexander Calder, 1951

From "What Abstract Art Means to Me," a symposium held in 1951 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and published in the *Bulletin*, Spring, 1951, p. 8.

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